employments under their respective jurisdictions.

(c) to (e) With a view to reduce the disparities within the Region the Central Government have issued guidelines for setting up Regional Minimum Wages Advisory Committees. In the absence of a uniform minimum wage in the country, the Central Government floated the concept of a national floor level minimum wages and fixed it at Rs. 35/- per day in 1996 based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour (1991) and subsequent rise in the price level. The national floor level wage was last revised to Rs. 45/- per day with effect from 30.11.1999 to neutralize further rise in the Consumer Price Index. The States/UTs have been requested to ensure that the minimum wage in none of their scheduled employments is below the national floor level wage.

Privatisation of coir board

*725. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government decided to privatize 32 showrooms as well as the Hindustan Coir of the Coir Board;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are aware of strong resentment over this decision; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI KARIYA MUNDA): (a) and (b) The Expenditure Reforms Commission (ERC), which had been set up to suggest measures for effecting improvement and reducing budgetary support for Government funded institutions had recommended that Coir Board should withdraw from direct production and marketing activities and instead assume the role of a facilitator and promoter of coir industry. The ERC had *inter-alia*, suggested that the showrooms-cum-sales depots of Coir Board should progressively be handed over on agency or commission basis to trading houses with the exception of a few showrooms in metropolitan towns which may be retained for demonstration purposes. Similarly, the Hindustan Coir Factory should also be privatized or handed over to a cooperative. The Government is in agreement with the recommendations of the ERC.

(c) and (d) Some representations have been received against privatization/cooperativization of showrooms and the Hindustan Coir Factory which are under consideration of the Government.

Effect of nuclear test

†*726. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether nuclear test leads to dangerous effects on nature and environment;

(b) the likely ill effects as a result thereof; and

(c) whether such tests can be undertaken at other places beside Rajasthan, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Fully contained underground nuclear tests as conducted by India have no dangerous effects on nature or the environment.

(b) does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Such tests can be undertaken only at those places which fulfil certain attributes with respect to properties of rock strata, geohydrology, isolation of the place from populated area etc.

Tariff for ILD Calls

*727. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Telephone Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has approved tariff for some of the private companies for the International Long Distance calls;

(b) if so, the tariffs as approved by TRAI;

(c) the private companies which have been granted ISD licence;

(d) whether the revised tariff has been introduced by these companies; and

(e) if so, from which date?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.